

tenure as President, he prided himself as a "steward of the people". Mrs. Virginia Strickland Rogers, whether consciously or not, has lived and continues to live by this motto as well. She has been a public servant and a distinguished member of her community for most of her lifetime. She is an active member of her church, the Cistern Hill Missionary Baptist Church, where she sits on the church's Board of Mothers and February Club. When she is not in church, Mrs. Rogers, who is a retired food service worker, drives the elderly in the community to their doctors' appointments and escorts them on shopping excursions. The latter of these tasks she does not mind though, because she reportedly is an "avid shopper". Also, in her spare time, Mrs. Rogers loves to show off her "green thumb". She enjoys gardening and is known to tinker around in her garden for hours at a time.

I cannot even begin to imagine the volumes of historically significant events Mrs. Virginia Rogers has witnessed with her own eyes over her lifetime. The town of Como is lucky to have such a resident who is so involved and committed to community. I hope that other members follow her example as well.

Among the celebrants at Mrs. Rogers' "centennial bash" will be her friends in the community and also her 10 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren, and 35 great great grandchildren.

Happy one-hundredth birthday Mrs. Rogers! I wish you the best on your day and hope you see many more.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT HERTZBERG

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 5, 2002

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, today California says goodbye to Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg and says hello to incoming Speaker Herb Wesson. Speaker Hertzberg served in this position with abundant personal energy and unbridled enthusiasm. He clearly loved this job and worked hard for the people of California.

Hertzberg is affectionately known as "Speaker Hugsberg" for his propensity to enthusiastically embrace friends, foes, and strangers. Indeed these famous hugs have spread beyond California to many of us on Capitol Hill and most recently to members of the Hazardous Materials team charged with decontaminating the Hart Senate Office building.

These hugs will never end, but Hertzberg's term-limited position as Speaker ends today. Speaker Hertzberg will also leave the Assembly seat he has represented in the Legislature since 1996 at the end of the year. Speaker Hertzberg's presence in the institution will far outlast his two years as Speaker and he leaves a permanent mark on the State Capitol.

Hertzberg instituted some groundbreaking changes during his brief tenure. He opened an on-site childcare center and upgraded technology throughout the Assembly. He founded the Capitol Institute, which now bears his name, to establish innovative training courses for freshman Members and legislative staff. California is the world's fifth largest economy

and Speaker Hertzberg opened the Speaker's Office of International Relations. He injected a humorous touch of his heritage into the Capitol's culture by publishing a guide on Yiddish, so everyone in the Legislature and Capitol Press Corps could translate the colorful phrases he so frequently uttered during floor sessions.

Hertzberg understood working together means just that and maintained a continuous presence in Washington, D.C. through an Office of Federal Relations. He was quick to point out that what happens in Washington, D.C. matters in California. He frequently led delegations of legislators to D.C. to discuss state issues with federal officials. Hertzberg was determined to work with all of us in Washington, D.C. to maximize California's share of federal dollars.

Hertzberg is a gifted and tireless legislator, who worked to enact long-needed reforms of California's foster care system, significantly expand access to low-cost health insurance for working families, and help pass the two largest park bonds in state history. He was also the lead negotiator during extended discussions that led to the passage of the largest school construction bond in state history.

After September 11, he moved quickly to establish a statewide task force to assess the impact of terrorism on California's economy and to recommend steps to improve public safety and restore public confidence. He visited Washington to meet with federal officials and coordinate terrorism preparedness and response activities. In December, he led a delegation to Taiwan and Japan, to address post-September 11 tourism and to promote trade with California.

As we celebrate Speaker Hertzberg's achievements, I wish him all the best in his next endeavor. I know he will be extremely successful. All the best for the bright future to Speaker Robert Hertzberg, his wife Dr. Cynthia Telles-Hertzberg, and sons Daniel, David, and Raymond.

REMEMBERING SUKHBIR SINGH OSAN

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 5, 2002

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to hear of the passing of Khalistani journalist Sukhbir Singh Osan. He died of a heart attack on January 19, 2002. Mr. Osan was only 31 years of age.

Mr. Osan was a terrific reporter who exposed many scandals through his website, Burning Punjab. He reported many stories showing India's pattern of terrorism against its own people. In addition to running his website, he wrote for several Indian newspapers.

The Indian government had banned the viewing of Burning Punjab in Punjab and a few neighboring states. When that did not shut down the site, India brought a fake criminal case against Burning Punjab, falsely claiming it was a "newspaper" operating out of Punjab. These actions make it clear that Mr. Osan's reports were greatly disturbing to the Indian government.

Sukhbir Singh Osan was a courageous reporter, one of the few who would stand up to

the Indian government. He will be greatly missed by the people whose interests he served, the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, and by all the people who care about freedom in South Asia.

The Council of Khalistan put out an excellent press release on Mr. Osan's passing. I am placing it in the RECORD in his memory. In addition, I would also like to insert a February 1, 2002, article from PPA News regarding the killing of Kashmiris by Indian soldiers.

IN MEMORY OF S. SUKHBIR SINGH OSAN

LONGTIME JOURNALIST, FOUNDER OF BURNING PUNJAB, EXPOSED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, REPORTED ON FREEDOM STRUGGLE—GOVERNMENT HAD FILED FALSE CASE AGAINST BURNING PUNJAB, BANNED IT

WASHINGTON, DC, January 21, 2002.—Sukhbir Singh Osan, 31, journalist and founder of the website Burning Punjab (<http://www.burningpunjab.com>), died of a heart attack over the weekend. Sardar Osan also wrote for several Indian newspapers.

"The passing of Sardar Osan is a great loss for the Sikh Nation," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. The Council of Khalistan is the government pro tempore of Khalistan and leads the struggle to liberate the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. "He was an excellent reporter and a stalwart Sikh who exposed the human-rights violations against the Sikhs by the Indian government and reported on the Sikh freedom struggle," he said. "His website, Burning Punjab, is one of the best sources available for news from Punjab, Khalistan." Osan was also a lawyer.

Recently, the Indian government filed a false case against Burning Punjab, falsely claiming it was a "newspaper." The Indian government had banned the viewing of Burning Punjab in Punjab and elsewhere in northwest India. A Deputy Inspector General was specifically assigned to "deal with" Sardar Osan. "I think the stress from that false case may have brought about his heart attack," said Dr. Aulakh.

"Sardar Osan was one of the leading voices in exposing the Indian government's repression of the Sikhs," Aulakh said. "He exposed phony Sikh leaders such as S.S. Mann, Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, Didar Singh Bains, and others. This was an extremely important service," said Dr. Aulakh.

According to a report in May by the Movement Against State Repression, India admitted that 52,268 Sikh political prisoners are rotting in Indian jails without charge or trial. Many have been in illegal custody since 1984. The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984. Over 75,000 Kashmiri Muslims have been killed since 1988. In May, Indian troops were caught red-handed trying to set fire to a Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) and some Sikh houses in Kashmir. Two independent investigations have proven that the Indian government carried out the March 2000 massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chithisinghpura. In August 1999, U.S. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher said that for Sikhs, Kashmiri Muslims, and other minorities "India might as well be Nazi Germany."

"The service Sardar Osan gave to the Sikh Nation was immense," said Dr. Aulakh. "He is one of the few people in Punjab who was not afraid to tell the truth. The Sikh Nation will miss him very much," Dr. Aulakh said. "On behalf of the Sikh diaspora, I would like to offer my condolences to Sardar Osan's family. I can only hope that Burning Punjab will be continued in his memory."